

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 SP-02
STR-04 TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 AF-08 DODE-00
PM-04 H-01 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-06
/117 W

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P R 251809Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9859
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 01360

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, EEC, XF
SUBJECT: POSSIBILITIES OF POLITICAL STATEMENTS ON ARAB-
ISRAEL ISSUE BY EC MEMBERS AND IN EURO-ARAB
DIALOGUE

REFERENCE: (A) BRUSSELS 554; (B) BONN 1239

SUMMARY: IN TWO RECENT DISCUSSIONS SENIOR OFFICERS OF
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THE FCO HAVE GENERALLY REASSURED US THAT DURING BRITISH
PRESIDENCY THERE IS LITTLE PROSPECT THAT EC WILL ISSUE
DECLARATION ON THE ARAB-ISRAELI ISSUE GOING BEYOND THE
EXPRESSIONS USED LAST YEAR. HOWEVER, THE FCO IS NOT SURE
WHAT THE FRENCH MIGHT DO UNILATERALLY. END SUMMARY

1. FCO ASSISTANT UNDER SECRETARY WEIR BRIEFED EMBOFF ON

WEIR'S VISIT TO PARIS WHICH HAD TAKEN PLACE JANUARY 19 FOR BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS WITH THE FRENCH ON MIDDLE EASTERN AFFAIRS. THE FRENCH TOLD HIM THAT THEY AGREE IT IS PREMATURE TO CONSIDER ANY NEW INITIATIVE BY THE EC ON MEDIATING IN THE ARAB-ISRAELI ISSUE. THE FRENCH ALSO AGREED THAT THERE IS STILL NO NEED FOR ANOTHER EC DECLARATION ON THE SUBJECT. HOWEVER, WEIR NOTED THAT WHEN THE BRITISH RECOMMENDED CAUTION REGARDING EXPANDING THE POLITICAL CONTENT OF THE EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE, THE FRENCH RAISED THEIR EYEBROWS. WHEN WEIR ASKED THE FRENCH WHAT THEY HAVE IN MIND IN THE MIDDLE EAST, THEY "RETREATED TO EXPRESSIONS OF GENERAL DEFENSIVE ANALYSIS". WEIR CAME AWAY FROM PARIS WITH THE DISTINCT FEELING THAT THE FRENCH ARE HOLDING OUT ON HIM REGARDING THEIR THOUGHTS ON THE POSSIBILITIES OF THEIR UNDERTAKING SOME FORM OF UNILATERAL DIPLOMATIC EFFORT IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

2. SUBSEQUENTLY ON JANUARY 24 EMBOFF WAS BRIEFED BY FCO ASSISTANT UNDER SECRETARY FABER, WHO IS IN DIRECT CHARGE OF EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE FOR THE FCO AND HEADS THE EC AMBASSADORIAL-LEVEL DELEGATION TO THE EURO-ARAB GENERAL COMMITTEE. FABER CAUTIONED US AGAINST OVERESTIMATING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE. HE NOTED THAT THE MOTIVATION OF SOME EUROPEANS IN PURSUING THE DIALOGUE IS SIMPLY TO SEEK TO GET MORE BUSINESS IN THE MIDDLE EAST. HOWEVER, THE CONCERN OF THE MORE STATESMANLY IS SIMPLY TO PREVENT THIS PARTICULAR DIALOGUE WITH THE ARABS FROM BREAKING DOWN NOW THAT IT HAS BEEN SO PAINSTAKINGLY LAUNCHED.

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3. REVIEWING RECENT PREPARATIONS FOR THE FORTHCOMING GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING IN TUNIS, FABER SAID THAT IN DECEMBER FOR THE FIRST TIME THE ARABS HAD HELD A PRE-LIMINARY COORDINATING MEETING OF THEIR OWN IN PREPARATION FOR THE TALKS. ON JANUARY 8 OR 9 FABER WITH MEYER OF THE EC COMMISSION HAD GONE TO CAIRO TO FINALIZE THE AGENDA WITH MAHMOUD RIAD. IN THAT MEETING FABER SAID HE CAUTIONED RIAD THAT THE GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING WOULD TAKE PLACE VERY SOON AFTER THE NEW ADMINISTRATION HAD TAKEN OVER IN THE U.S. AND THAT THEREFORE THE PARTICIPANTS SHOULD CONSIDER CAREFULLY WHAT EFFECTS PUBLIC POLITICAL DECLARATIONS AT THE MEETING WOULD HAVE. FABER INDICATED THAT THE EUROPEANS WOULD BE PREPARED TO EXPOUND ON THE COMMON POLITICAL POSITION THEY HAD ALREADY REACHED AND PUT IT IN A CLEAR LIGHT, BUT NOT GO BEYOND IT. HOWEVER, HE CONFIRMED THAT RIAD AND THE ARAB FOREIGN MINISTERS REITERATED THEIR INTEREST IN GIVING POLITICAL CONTENT TO THE DIALOGUE (AS REPORTED IN REFTEL A). THE

DRAFT AGENDA FOR TUNIS AS NOW PROVISIONALLY AGREED TO PROVIDES FOR THE SAME PROCEDURE AS AT THE LUXEMBOURG MEETING. WHILE THE BRITISH WISH TO HOLD TO THIS, THE ARABS WISH TO HAVE A "MORE GENUINE, LESS FORMALIZED" POLITICAL DISCUSSION OR DEBATE.

4. FABER TOLD EMBOFF HE DID NOT SEE IN PRACTICE HOW THERE COULD BE A FULL-FLEDGED POLITICAL DEBATE AT THE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 01360

TUNIS MEETING SINCE THE BRITISH IN THE EC CHAIR MUST
CONFINE THEMSELVES TO A STATEMENT OF THE EC "COMMON

DENOMINATOR" POSITION, AND IF ALL EC MEMBERS CHIPPED IN THE EFFECT WOULD BE DIVISIVE. HOWEVER, SINCE THE EC MEMBERS WANT TO APPEAR TO BE DOING SOMETHING POSITIVE IN RESPONSE TO THE ARAB REQUEST, THE EC HAS INFORMED THE ARABS THAT IN TUNIS THE EC WILL BE READY TO ANSWER
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QUESTIONS ABOUT THE COMMON EC POLICY IN THE RESTRICTED GROUP WHICH AS AT LUXEMBOURG WILL MEET UNDER THE TWO PRESIDENTS TO DRAFT THE GENERAL AND POLITICAL PASSAGES OF THE COMMUNIQUE. AT THIS MEETING THE EC WILL BE REPRESENTED BY FABER AND BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE LAST (NETHERLANDS) AND NEXT (BELGIAN) EC PRESIDENTS.

5. FABER SAID THAT THE EUROPEAN COORDINATING GROUP ON THE EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE WOULD MEET IN LONDON JANUARY 27. HE INDICATED THAT MORE RESPONSIBILITY HAS BEEN DELEGATED TO HIM PERSONALLY TO WORK OUT PROCEDURAL ARRANGEMENTS THAN IN THE CASE OF SUBSTANTIVE POLICY.

6. BOTH WEIR AND FABER COMMENTED THAT FOLLOWING RECENT EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST BY THE ARAB FOREIGN MINISTERS IN CAIRO IN GIVING MORE POLITICAL CONTENT TO THE DIALOGUE, THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR AND HIS SENIOR OFFICERS CALLED AT "ALL FOUR LEVELS" IN THE FCO TO PROTEST AGAINST ANY EC AGREEMENT TO DO SO.

7. COMMENT: INSOFAR AS WE MAY HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THE EC, IT DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE WITH THE BRITISH. WE CONCUR WITH THE RECOMMENDATION IN BRUSSELS 544, WITH THE CAVEAT THAT IN DRAFTING OUR EXPRESSION WE BEAR IN MIND THE FACT THAT THE EC MEMBERS REGARD THEIR CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT OF A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ARABS AS A VITAL INTEREST.

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Message Attributes

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